

# socialist standard

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Journal of The Socialist Party of Great Britain - Companion Party of the World Socialist Movement



## When workers fight...

## ...capitalism wins



Workers in  
Zimbabwe  
page 5



Gold  
diggers  
page 14



TV temper  
tantrums  
page 21

# socialist standard

JULY 2014  
contents

## FEATURES

<b>Ukraine</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Bruce &amp; Bannockburn</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Gold Wars Extra</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Resource-Based Economy</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Oliver</b>	<b>20</b>

## REGULARS

<b>Pathfinders</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Halo Halo!</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Cooking the Books</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Material World</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Greasy Pole</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Cooking the Books</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>Mixed Media</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>Reviews</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Proper Gander</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>Meetings</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>50 Years Ago</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>Action Replay</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>Voice from the Back</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>Free Lunch</b>	<b>24</b>

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# Introducing The Socialist Party

The Socialist Party is like no other political party in Britain. It is made up of people who have joined together because we want to get rid of the profit system and establish real socialism. Our aim is to persuade others to become socialist and act for themselves, organising democratically and without leaders, to bring about the kind of society that we are advocating in this journal. We are solely concerned with building a movement of socialists for socialism. We are not a reformist party with a programme of policies to patch up capitalism.

We use every possible opportunity to make

new socialists. We publish pamphlets and books, as well as CDs, DVDs and various other informative material. We also give talks and take part in debates; attend rallies, meetings and demos; run educational conferences; host internet discussion forums, make films presenting our ideas, and contest elections when practical. Socialist literature is available in Arabic, Bengali, Dutch, Esperanto, French, German, Italian, Polish, Spanish, Swedish and Turkish as well as English.

The more of you who join The Socialist Party the more we will be able to get our ideas across, the more experiences we

will be able to draw on and greater will be the new ideas for building the movement which you will be able to bring us.

The Socialist Party is an organisation of equals. There is no leader and there are no followers. So, if you are going to join we want you to be sure that you agree fully with what we stand for and that we are satisfied that you understand the case for socialism.

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# socialist standard

JULY 2014

## Editorial

### Middle East: wars without end

THE COLLAPSE 25 years ago of US rivals for world domination, the Russian state-capitalist empire, was hailed as a step forward for humanity by the US and its bloc of Western capitalist states. Their ideologues proclaimed the end of history and the beginning of an era of peace and free trade in a world of democratic states.

It hasn't turned out like that and was never going to. Capitalism is a system which has a built-in conflict between states, and the capitalist groups they represent, over sources of raw materials, trade routes, markets and investment outlets and areas to secure or protect these. Usually this takes place economically and through diplomacy but, when a state feels that its vital economic interests in one of these fields is under real threat, they resort to war.

Their rivals defeated, the United States and some of the others in the Western capitalist bloc felt confident enough to intervene militarily to overthrow regimes that were hostile to it even though they didn't really constitute a real immediate threat to their vital economic interests. Which is why some of the states in the bloc were opposed to this. But the attacks went ahead. The Taliban regime in Afghanistan was overthrown. Then the Saddam Hussein regime in Iraq. Then the Gaddafi regime in Libya. All were toppled, though after 14 years of war the Taliban have not been crushed and the Western powers are preparing to call it a day and withdraw their troops without victory. Next up for regime change was Syria. After that it was to be a much tougher nut, Iran.

The Western capitalist bloc stirred up a civil war in Syria

and now they are reaping the whirlwind – a fanatical Islamist movement which has conquered parts of Syria and has now invaded Iraq and whose ultimate aim is to drive the West out of the Middle East. Panic stricken, the West has now appealed to Iran to help them out. No doubt Iran will seize the opportunity to steal a march on its main rival for regional hegemony, Saudi Arabia.

Tony Blair is claiming that this has nothing to do with the invasion of Iraq in 2003 which he tricked his cabinet and parliament into backing. But nobody believes him. It is a continuation of the same battle for control of the Middle East and its oil resources that has gone on ever since the end of the Second World War, with crisis after crisis and war after war.

The West's rivals for the control of the Middle East oilfields and the trade routes needed to get the oil out – as well as of the strategic areas and points to protect these – have been sections of the local capitalist class in the region. The ideology they used, to begin with, to get a mass following was an anti-imperialist nationalism which had a left-wing tinge and even employed a 'socialist' terminology. This was the ideology of Nasser in Egypt, the Baathist regimes in Syria and Iraq, and the PLO in the 1970s. Since the collapse of the Russian state-capitalist bloc, Islamic fundamentalism has emerged as the dominant ideology of those who want local capitalist, rather than Western imperialist, control of the oil resources of the Middle East. Hardly a step forward for humanity. In many ways, rather the opposite.

## What's going on with the rainforest?

LAST MONTH the BBC broadcast a documentary called 'I bought a rainforest', in which a good-hearted but slightly buffoonish wildlife cameraman embarks on a one-man crusade to save a small corner of Peruvian rainforest by buying it and pitching camp. As might be expected, the cameraman's schoolboy quest to ride to the Amazon's rescue like the Great White Colonial Hope is foiled at every turn. His 'rainforest' turns out to be pre-logged scrubland. Nevertheless he puts up 'Protected Area' signs which are promptly ignored. He can't patrol the land and neither can the scarce rangers. He has a logging squatter he can't get rid of. He has armed cocaine-growing neighbours he is terrified of. He visits the local indigenous tribe and despairs that they are forced to log their own land. He visits a gold miner working 16 hour days in toxic conditions for mere pennies. He accompanies loggers who can't get work any other way. He wails that 'the west doesn't need mahogany' and that one tree supports more biodiversity than the whole of Western Europe. Finally he comes to the miserable conclusion that if he was one of these people, he'd be a logger too.

The overall environmental message of this generally insightful and sympathetic documentary is that the Amazon is doomed and so are we. Recent reports add to the gloom, with Brazil's environment minister citing a 28 percent increase in deforestation last year (eg Al Jazeera, 15 November 2013).

What the reports often don't say is that this is an anomalous 'uptick' after the lowest rate of deforestation on record. Deforestation has seen a 70 percent decline since 2004. Despite five decades of clearance over 80 percent of the Amazon is still intact. So is the rainforest doomed or not?



Unhelpfully, the media confuses matters with its preference for bad news over good, and its cavalier use of different metrics to make things look worse. For example, a report about gold mining in the Peruvian Amazon (<http://tinyurl.com/ohnyumf>) cites an annual clearance of 15,180 acres of forest since 2008, twice previous estimates. The reason it is twice previous estimates is that in 2008 there was a global credit crunch and the price of gold went through the roof, sparking a Peruvian gold rush which, as happened before in the 1980s, will peter out as the price of gold crashes. But 15,180 acres is just over 61 square kilometres. At that rate of clearance and assuming no growth-back (which is impossible), it would take 13,000 years to clear the Peruvian Amazon, and 88,000 years to clear the whole rainforest. The only reason to use acreage as a metric is that it gives a big fat number.

Bucking the trend, the science press likes to emphasise good news over bad, promoting the image of science as a positive force in society. So we get 'Deforestation Success Stories' from the Union of Concerned Scientists (UCS), which cites a 50 percent increase in protected areas, good progress towards a halt to agricultural clearance by 2020 and towards net zero deforestation by means of compensating regrowth elsewhere (ucsusa.org and *New Scientist*, 14 June). UCS wants to motivate us, not demoralise us: 'There are enough examples

of success, some very rapid and far-reaching, to encourage continuing the global effort—and indeed, stepping it up' (ucsusa.org).

As most people already know, the overwhelming cause of Amazon deforestation is beef ranching (65-70 percent – an area the size of France). 5 – 10 percent is 'Big Ag', mainly soya for biofuels and animal feed (including dog food), 20 – 25 percent is subsistence farming by locals. Logging is around 2 – 3 percent, while all others including mining, fires, roads, settlements and dams account for just 1 – 2 percent.

So what happened in 2004-5 to cause such a massive drop in clearance rates? First, studies estimating that deforestation caused 17 – 29 percent of global greenhouse gas emissions provoked a raft of control measures, which included punitive Forest Code laws by Brazil outlawing logging and imposing restrictions on beef and soya producers, who responded by making better use of existing cleared land. Second, the Brazilian real strengthened against the dollar, weakening Brazilian beef exports, and world soybean prices also fell by more than 25 percent. The 2008 financial crash further reduced profitability and consequent deforestation. As profits went down, more trees stayed up.

With last year's 28 percent increase in clearance, the signs are that this has turned around. Soy is once again up and the real is down. Cattle and soya farming intensification is starting to hit a wall, while the Forest Code has been revised (ie revoked). This has outraged environmentalists, but the truth is that none of the control programmes were working. Most are voluntary, or rely on threats rather than incentives. The UN REDD+ scheme to compensate rainforest countries for preserving primary forest has been 'gamed' by dodgy companies and 'carbon cowboys' and none of the money has gone to the indigenous tribes it was aimed at. In short, the fate of the rainforest is inextricably bound up with the fortunes of international capitalism. As the world economy once again shifts into boom mode, the gears will once again start shifting on the Amazon tractors, trucks and bulldozers.

But statistics can only tell you so much. The BBC documentary instead focussed on the human drama, and it's here that you see the real bind that capitalism puts people in.

Nothing brings home the reality of Amazonian poverty like seeing a child, brain-damaged from an industrial machine, smiling vacantly while her mother weeps and her father explains with admirable dignity why he's obliged to continue defying the rich cameraman's wishes. Nothing brings home the human cost of gold mining like seeing a young boy standing for an hour in a bucket of mercury solution, as if he's treading grapes. Nothing confounds the moral mind like the religious logger who loves the forest, and the plea 'what will you pay me NOT to cut this tree down?' And nothing so eloquently and poignantly captures the impotence of western liberal thinking like the cameraman agonising over how to choose between trees and people.

For socialists the problem is not trees versus people, but trees and people versus capitalism. The cameraman doesn't understand this, not because it's a hidden problem but because conversely it's too enormous to comprehend. It's the forest that he can't see for the trees.

We never claim that socialism would have no problems. But by sharing the world democratically, without leaders and without buying and selling property, an entire class of 'commodification' problems would certainly vanish. The Amazon is the world's greatest 'tragedy of the commons', where land of value to everyone is ruined by the exploitation of private ownership and trade relations. Take it into common ownership and custodianship, and our most important carbon sink and biodiversity hothouse laboratory can certainly be rescued, and indeed made to thrive.

PJS

# The condition of the working class in Zimbabwe

## Extracts from two communications we have received from workers there.

WORKERS OF Zimbabwe are a sheep without a shepherd as the ZCTU has been hijacked by politicians. Majority workers have no meaningful salaries but the ZCTU is dumb-founded. Most employers including the Chinese continue unleashing unfair labour practices but the ZCTU is taking no action in bringing this unfairness to an end. In 2013, government once announced that it was not going to offer its workers any salary increment due to an allegedly unsustainable wage bill and the ZCTU never even raised a finger. It is alleged diamond companies were not remitting part of their proceeds to the Treasury as required by the law of the land and the ZCTU is grinning at that yet

workers who are hard-hit by the imposed sanctions expect better leadership. It's a pity that most workers earn meagre salaries below the Poverty Datum Line (PDL). In a nutshell, it is open that these trade unions are simply defensive organizations of the working class with the

limited working role of protecting wages and motionless actions that its effectiveness ought to be judged.

On another note, President Mugabe was shocked to note that there is a clique of fat cats gobbling hefty salaries and earning more than him in the economically troubled Zimbabwe at the expense of the majority workers. Following to this, media revelations triggered public outrage and exposed that some top bosses were earning obscene salaries and allowances while the economy remains stuck in the doldrums. Imagine during these hard times in Zimbabwe, there is a top executive – now forced to quit – who was earning a whopping US\$535 000 gross salary per month, comprising US\$230 000 as basic salary and US\$305 499 in benefits. Imagine during these hard times in Zimbabwe there is a top executive – now suspended – who was earning a basic salary of US\$27 000, which ballooned to US\$44 000 with perks that included a monthly allowance of US\$3 000 and an additional US\$2 500 for his personal staff. Imagine that during these hard times in Zimbabwe there is a top executive fetching home about US\$147 000 in house repairs and maintenance allowances with total benefits gobbling about US\$210 000 excluding salary. US\$147 000 in house and maintenance allowance yet most workers earn below the Poverty Data Line! It then boggles one's mind that most struggling parastatals and local authorities are awarding their managers fatty salaries while unable to pay their workers for months.

Despite most parastatals used to contribute 40 percent to the local GDP, they now have turned loss-making entities. For this reason, the cabinet some time ago moved to impose a limit to salaries for chief executive officers and top managers of parastatals, public enterprises and local authorities at an interim maximum total pay package of about US\$6000 per month. This move has also raised the issue of the need for a comprehensive framework to govern the remuneration of public office bearers and managers of state owned enterprises as done in other countries. The gluttonous act by the involved top bosses to rake in huge salaries at this



conditions and it is by the ZCTU

time public entities are operating in serious debt resulting in their failure to pay workers and meet their service delivery mandates is morally wrong.

However, it's now a number of months and in vain, cabinet have not implemented the move to trim excessive salaries earned by chief executive officers (CEOs) of state owned enterprises. A bruising bout appears to be at its helm with some local authorities having already indicated that they would ignore the government's directive saying the order was against the country's labour laws. They insist they won't agree with cabinet's move to cap salaries as they stand guided by the country's constitution and labour laws.

Concurrently, there is dilapidated service delivery in most urban and rural authorities for the bulk of the revenue being collected from residents is being exhausted on salaries. These fat cat salaries have raised eye brows and have created deepened divide between rich and poor. Although government has endeavoured to put in place a corporate governance and remuneration policy framework to give guidelines on how parastatals and local authorities should remunerate their executives it is an in vain attempt as the top bosses are still raking fat salaries into their coffers. That proposed framework would give birth to a body that would democratically and transparently provide independent assessment and recommendations on the remunerations and conditions of service for public office bearers including top managers of state enterprises.

Up to now, cabinet has gone quiet on implementing this issue of making sure that salaries for top bosses of



Shocked: President Mugabe

state run parastatals and local authorities should not exceed US\$6000 per month. As capitalism is on the side of minority the top bosses, government will simply find the easy way out by shelving the issue. This is because the involved fat cats who are not even providing

meaningful services to the public and economic benefits to the country are aware that once this remuneration policy is put in place, time will be gone when they would be seen sitting back and milking public enterprises through mismanagement and corruption. Despite President Mugabe's recent reiteration on the stance on corruption and hefty salaries it has become an uphill task for the government to effect the proposed salary framework which would see about US\$2 million being saved annually if implemented. Despite all these efforts, workers still remain in the cold.

In fact, capitalism cannot be moulded to operate in the interests of the working class as is very evident by the events in Zimbabwe.

### BIGBOY MUSEMWA

THE FIRST lot of venturers to the continent were Christian missionaries, empire and wealth hunters. The current equally selfish ruling elite will as usual blame the plight of the Yirira on the 'negligent racist colonial regime', as if they (current leadership) did not adopt the same cruel, selfish and self-glory-seeking mentality, exaggerating their role in the struggle to overthrow the exploitative colonial system.

**continued page 22**

## Have you heard what's in the Stars?

PREPARATIONS, IT seems, are already well under way to ensure that before we foul this planet up completely, we are able to abandon ship and bugger off to colonise Mars.

According to a report in the *Independent* (2 June) more than 200,000 people have so far applied to be on the first one-way trip (no return flights will be possible) and a privately funded 'Mars One' mission intends to land the initial batch of 20 onto the planet by 2025. (Where the temperature is minus 60C and the atmosphere has so little oxygen that it cannot be breathed).

One of the candidates to make it through the first part of the selection process is Sarah, 30, an accountant from Inverness. 'I want to dispel the myth that accountants are dull' she says, and adds 'I find myself waking up every morning thinking there must be more to life'. Yes, Sarah, most members of the working class feel exactly the same way, but hopefully we can still sort the problems out on this planet. Starting again from scratch on Mars seems a bit extreme.

We must admit that we haven't given a great deal of thought to what skills will be most useful on Mars, Sarah, but just forgetting the temperature and lack of oxygen for a minute; if you think your accountancy expertise to tot up your fellow colonists savings and sort out their tax returns will be very much in demand, being thought dull may be the least of your problems.

'The first inhabitants will decide how to organise themselves politically, after studying different social structures on Earth' says the *Independent*. Exactly



which social structures they have in mind they don't say, but imagine the problems the first settlers will face if they try to set up a system based on private ownership, and using money and a market system.

Will they take a supply of sterling, euros, or dollars or will they manufacture their own Mars money? (Perhaps instead of taking gold bars to base the system on, they could use Mars bars?). But more importantly, how will they decide which bits of the planet are owned by which people? Will they employ each other and pay each other wages to do the work? Who will do the dirty jobs? Which ones will be the bosses and which the workers, and how will that decision be made? Will they set up borders, and armies and police forces to keep each other in order? And if they discover oil, or gold, or diamonds, or potatoes (which would be much more useful) who will they belong to? It sounds so bloody unworkable you wonder why we ever tried it here.

And as if these problems were not enough, the *Independent* assumes that they will also need a heavenly input. 'Religious activity and beliefs will be a matter of individual choice' they say.

Perhaps Mars is a bit closer to heaven than we are here on Earth, but why they need to throw this spiritual spanner into the works we can only guess.

As far as we know there is no intelligent life out there, so let's just hope that there are no less-than-intelligent Martian Holy-Joes with a little green Martian god and a prayer book of their own. Imagine having to convince the locals that they now also need some Martian mullahs, Martian rabbis, and Martian parsons.

If that didn't bugger the whole project up the establishment of a Martian capitalist system certainly would.

NW

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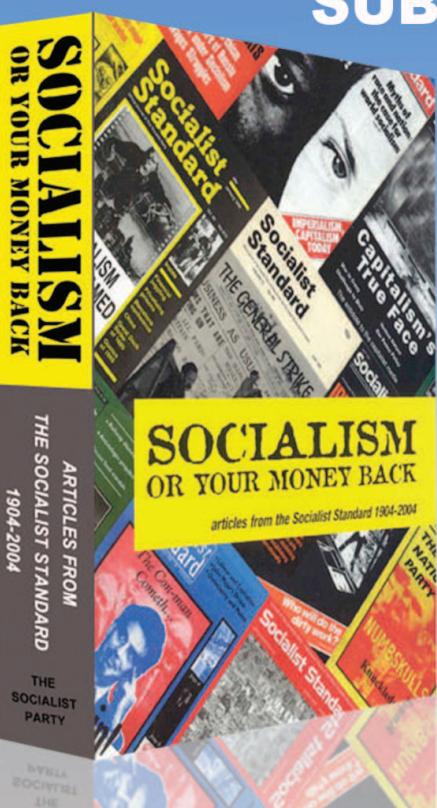
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## Fighting against falling prices

'DRAGHI HOLDS QE in reserve as he wheels out the big guns for the fight against deflation' read the headline in the *Times* (6 June) reporting an announcement by the president of the European Central Bank of a package of measures aimed at increasing inflation in the Eurozone.

Deflation is the opposite of inflation whatever the definition of the latter. These days 'inflation' means rising prices, so deflation means falling prices. So what's wrong with that? Aren't supermarkets, furniture stores and the like always boasting about how they have cut, slashed or even massacred prices? If things cost less to buy shouldn't that mean that we are better off as we don't have to spend so much on what we need? That the pound in our pocket has expanded not shrunk?

'Inflation' originally meant a rise in the general price level caused by issuing too much currency, i.e., by inflating the amount of it put into circulation. But a general rise in prices can be caused by another factor – the level of economic activity in a boom which leads to paying demand coming to rise faster than industry can supply it. In a slump the opposite tends to happen with supply coming to exceed demand, so driving prices down.

In between the two world wars falls in the general price level, some quite severe, were not uncommon. Not that this made people better off, at least not for long as wages too are a price and, despite rearguard trade union action, fell along with prices generally. In that period inflation, as increasing the amount of money in circulation, was seen by some as a way-out of a slump in the belief that rising prices would encourage capitalist firms to invest. Keynes, without putting it so crudely, lent some support to this by arguing that what was important were the government's tax and borrowing policies while the amount of currency put into circulation (by then not linked to gold but 'managed' by the central bank) could be left to follow suit.

The first Keynesian budget in Britain was in 1940 and it is no coincidence that ever since the general price level has risen steadily. It continued to rise even during a severe economic downturn in the mid-70s when, between the wars, this would have resulted in a fall. In fact a new phenomenon emerged – a rising price level during a slump – which was dubbed 'stagflation'. What had happened was that the upward pressure on the price level exerted by the government inflating the currency had countered the downward pressure that occurs during a slump.

This discredited Keynesianism and governments tried to reduce inflation by reducing the money supply. The rise in the general price level was eventually steadied at about 2 percent a year, which is now the level at which it is government policy in all developed capitalist countries to aim to maintain it. But the present slump has been so severe that central banks and governments are afraid that this time the downward pressures might overcome the upward pressures, resulting in a fall in the general price level, or deflation.

In April the rise in the price level in the Eurozone fell to a mere 0.5 percent from 0.7 percent the previous month. That's not yet deflation but Draghi said that the ECB's measures were a reaction 'to the risks of a too prolonged period of low inflation'. We always used to be told that inflation was a bad thing but now they are telling us that it's too low inflation that's bad and that falling prices are even worse. It seems they want the pound in our pocket to shrink.

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# Bashing

# the Bushmen



U.N. SECRETARY-General Ban Ki-moon recently warned 'Preventing people's access to safe water is a denial of a fundamental human right...deliberate targeting of civilians and depriving them of essential supplies is a clear breach of international humanitarian and human-rights law.'

Botswana uses water as a weapon against the Kalahari bushmen in an attempt to force them from their land. The government smashed their only major water borehole, a terrible act that was only overturned in court years later. It has continued to forbid them access to wild-life water-holes and mining water supplies.

The indigenous Bushmen people (or the San or Baswara, all names having pejorative roots) have been in conflict with the Botswana government for several years. Many live in the Central Kalahari Game Reserve where they have continued to be persecuted to drive them from their land. Banned from hunting, and forced to apply for permits to enter the reserve, they are now being pushed to the brink of extinction. The government policy is clearly to intimidate and frighten the Bushmen into staying in the resettlement camps, and making the lives of those who have gone back to their ancestral land impossible. The government boasts that all San in Botswana get free schooling, free medical help and if they register they receive free food. Despite government promises of a better life outside the Reserve many are now gripped by alcoholism and HIV/AIDS, previously unknown.

'We are used to feeding ourselves – now dependant on government hand-outs, we are being made lazy and stupid,' says Sesana. 'Now we are being treated like dogs. The dog is the only thing that can't bring its own food home. It has to wait for its owner to give it some food.'

Goiotseone Lobelo speaks fondly of life in the reserve, where she would wake up every morning and join the women in the village in collecting berries, nuts and roots to eat. 'I miss my home and the way we lived. Life was easy, there were lots of fruits, animals and there were no bars and no beer. Now we are lost,' says Goiotseone. She remembers the day they were forced to leave 'The police came, destroyed our homes and dumped us in the back of trucks with our belongings and brought us here. They dumped us here like we are nothing.'

In the early 1980s, diamonds were discovered in the reserve. Soon after, government ministers went into the reserve to tell the Bushmen living there that they would have to leave because of the diamond finds. Gem Diamonds has stated publicly that its

Gope mine contains a diamond deposit worth an estimated \$3.3 billion.

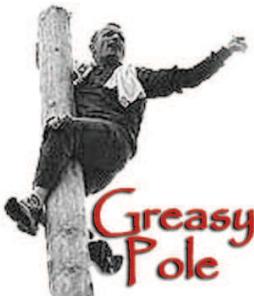
At the same time as preventing the Bushmen from accessing water, the government allows a safari company to operate a tourist camp in the reserve that made no provisions for the rights of the Bushmen on whose ancestral lands the camp sits. While Bushmen struggle to find enough water to survive on their lands, tourists sip iced cocktails by the swimming pool.

Desmond Tutu has condemned the eviction of the Kalahari Bushmen. 'The San Bushmen represent a 100,000 year-old culture that we should consider one of the world's treasures. And while progress is necessary, it cannot be that the only way to achieve progress is to remove the San from their ancestral lands and drive their traditions away. We've already seen this with the American Indians, the Aborigines, and it is also happening with the Tibetans. When a culture is destroyed in the name of progress, it is not progress, it is a loss for our world. Hundreds of thousands of years of wisdom, knowledge of nature, medicines, and ways of living together, go with them' (a plant used by the San was patented and licenced by a pharmaceutical company to produce an appetite suppressant drug for dieting).

In February this year Botswana's President Khama was a guest at a conservationist conference, alongside Prince Charles and Prince William. Khama has banned all hunting nationwide under the pretext of clamping down on poaching. However, it emerged that trophy hunters who pay up to \$8,000 to hunt giraffes and zebras are still being allowed to hunt on private ranches that have been exempted from the ban. Yet Bushmen who hunt with spears, bows and arrows are being arrested, beaten and jailed for subsistence hunting.

Survival International's director, Stephen Corry, said 'Banning hunting in order to feed your family, but allowing the wealthy to hunt for trophies, plays to a lobby still rooted in racist beliefs about tribal peoples' inferiority. The national park movement entailed the enforced eviction, often the complete destruction, of the tribes who lived off the land. Satellite imagery now proves that many tribal peoples are the world's best conservationists, yet they're still being destroyed. It's not 'conservation'; it's just an old colonial crime, and it's time the responsible organizations opposed it. Instead, they hide behind hollow policies, while continuing to support governments guilty of such inhuman behaviour.'

**ALJO**

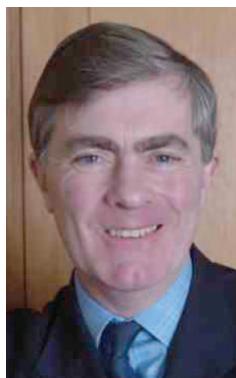


# Elections...or Earthquakes

'JUST LISTEN' blurted the engineering geologist, in language he is more accustomed to use on some massive, remote construction site, 'I get right pissed off when I hear some jumped-up politician talking about an earthquake when what they mean is that they are scared about losing an election. Because it's a serious matter – an irresistible force which can kill tens of thousands of people and lay waste to a developed city'. He knew what he was talking about; over just the past ten years there has been a succession of such disasters each bringing about a horrific death toll. There was Kashmir in 2005 when 73,000 died; 1908 Sichuan Province in China 87,000; 2010 in Haiti when it was 210,000; 2011 in Japan with 200,000 plus. But our understanding of the cause is inadequate, other than seismic waves from the energy released through the rupture of geological faults or volcanic bursts or nuclear tests... Over time there has been a mass of work centred on constructing a reliable method of prediction from which an adequate defence might have been designed but without any appreciable success. By any standards it is a vastly serious problem for the human race so there must be some frustration when the likes of David Cameron or Ed Miliband drivel about an earthquake to express their anxiety about whether their party will survive against the onslaught of an equally futile bunch such as Nigel Farage and his UKIP.

## Bribes

This was how it happened during the by-election in June at Newark in Nottinghamshire. Early political tremors had already been felt by the time the parties had announced the names of their candidates and Farage had described UKIP's success in the recent local and Euro elections as an episode in his much-promised 'political earthquake'. The by-election came about after the resignation of the Tory MP Patrick Mercer, whose fall from the heights had been remarkably rapid. The son of a future Bishop of Exeter, he went to public school and Sandhurst which prepared him for a career in the Army, garnished by two decorations and the rank of Colonel when he left in 1999 and eventually became an MP. But things began to go seriously wrong. He had to resign from Shadow Minister for Home Security when he referred to ethnic minority soldiers as 'idle and useless', accustomed to using their race as a 'cover' for unmilitary behaviour. Another example of his lack of discretion was when he recalled thinking, on being introduced to a young female Israeli soldier, that 'You don't look like a soldier to me. You look like a bloody Jew'. His chances of surviving all this had almost disappeared when he described David Cameron as 'despicable' and an 'arse'. And finally he was exposed taking bribes from a couple of under-cover reporters for asking questions as an MP. It was inevitable that he should be at first suspended until he chose to resign – which gave UKIP some hope that they were in with a chance of winning the seat.



*Clockwise from left:  
Mercer, Jenrick and  
Helmer*

## Newark

So the Newark Tories had to select a candidate for one of the safest seats in the country (Mercer's majority, even as he was under scrutiny, was some way above 16,000) and they would have been determined that whoever they settled on would be as different from Mercer as possible. Eventually emerging from the process was the smooth, prosperous 32 year old Robert Jenrick. But no sooner had he been chosen than a clutch of inconveniently undermining facts about him came to light. He had presented himself as 'a father, local man, son of a secretary and small businessman and state primary school educated'. But partnering these modest features there is a wife who is a high-flying commercial lawyer

operating under a rather more colourful professional name. Between them they bring in some £500,000 a year. Jenrick's claim to be a local man does not fit in with their joint ownership of a £2 million flat in Mayfair, a £2.5 million house in Westminster and a £1.1 million manor, originally owned by a slave owner, in Herefordshire. Somewhere in this lot there is a house in Newark which they recently began to rent – in fact just after Jenrick was adopted to fight the by-election. He works at Christies, the super-posh auction house but in this again there is some confusion for at first he described himself as the Managing Director of that firm when in fact he is at most a director – which would be lucrative enough for those others who are struggling to get by on the minimum wage or state

benefit. So is Jenrick just another of Cameron's posh Tory boys? He defends himself with the assurance that owning three expensive homes '...doesn't mean I don't know about life on the bread-line', which seems to have been satisfactory to the voters of Newark, who elected him with a majority reduced enough to cause just a few bumps and trembles but not the earthquake Farage was hoping for.

## Result

The UKIP candidate ('this brazen dandy' according to one observer) was Roger Helmer, who defected from the Tory Party in 2012 and has made himself notable with opinions, on a range of current issues, which could be moderately described as capricious. The Tories were anxious enough about UKIP to flood the constituency with big names; Cameron was there four times. It was to persuade – or frighten – the voters into supporting them because whatever the earthquakes may do capitalism cares for us.

**IVAN**



## Ukraine is now in the throes of full-scale civil war.

On one side – the ‘Maidan’ movement, the new government it brought to power in Kiev, the European and American backers of that government and (behind the scenes) the Western-oriented business magnates or ‘oligarchs’.

On the other side – the resistance movement known as the ‘Anti-Maidan’, a collection of armed groups in the country’s eastern regions (which are also fighting one another), the Russian government with its secret services and the Russia-oriented oligarchs.

Both the Maidan and the Anti-Maidan are basically nationalist movements (Ukrainian nationalist in one case, Russian nationalist in the other). Both feed on ethnic hatred. Both are willing to massacre unarmed civilians identified with the other side. They fight for the interests of different sections of Ukraine’s capitalist class. They have nothing to offer working people

except further suffering, bloodshed and privation, perhaps even famine.

Leftists in Ukraine and abroad look for redeeming features in these ‘grassroots’ movements, which they hope might overcome ethnic and regional divisions and merge into a single movement of popular protest against common ills. Some find grounds for hope in the Maidan, others in the Anti-Maidan, yet others in both.

There are indeed some themes common to both movements, such as outrage at pervasive corruption and hostility to oligarchs. But on the whole the negative aspects outweigh the positive ones, and there are no signs of this changing in the immediately foreseeable future.

It is in this context that we present an article from the internet blog of a Ukrainian anarchist who criticizes the illusions of many leftists about the anti-Maidan. Although we do not agree completely with all his formulations, his general perspective is consistent with our own.

**Stefan**

the ‘common herd’. The philistines of left and right share the same prejudices...

So the dirtier, the more stupid and the more illiterate the ‘worker’ the more inclined is the left-wing intellectual to believe in his authenticity. But for some that is not enough – red flags are needed to dispel their doubts... It does not matter to them that throughout the world the red flag is used not only by progressive but also by reactionary organisations and sects. It does not matter to them that for many of those who love Soviet symbols those symbols represent a powerful state and empire – and no more. It does not matter to them that nostalgia for Soviet times is not a dream of stateless communism but myth-overlaid memories of familiar rituals, stable rations, shiny missiles and a ‘strong hand’.

But if even the red rags held aloft

by the devotees of empire fail to convince the skeptic, then the next argument concerns Social Slogans. The stereotypical worker, covered in dirt, with a red rag and joyfully supporting ‘social slogans’ – there is a picture to gladden all but the hardest of left-wing hearts.

Let us consider what sort of slogans ring out at Anti-Maidan demonstrations. Ritual curses aimed at the oligarchs? Everyone curses the oligarchs – leftists curse them, rightists curse them, liberals and fascists curse them, their own venal journalists curse them. Finally, they curse one another. Hatred for ‘the oligarchs’ is a safe outlet for any social discontent. Does it pose a threat to the oligarchs? Not especially. Does it pose a threat to the capitalist system? No – in fact, it bolsters the system. It is a classical corporative, fascist technique – to divert the energy of an emerging workers’ movement away from criticism of capitalism as a system to criticism of individual ‘fat cats’. The result is either the replacement of one set of oligarchs by another or the strengthening of the state. Neither of these results brings the victory of the workers’ revolution any closer: capitalism as a system remains unchanged.

Let us pass on to the second empty demand – nationalisation. This too is a favorite for everyone from Trotskyists (what sort of Trotskyists would it be without fantasies of ‘nationalisation under workers’ control?’) to neo-Nazis (for whom it means something altogether different, something like Hitler’s ‘Aryanisation of the economy’). For many leftists ‘nationalisation’ is such a fetish that you only have to say the word and they lose all capacity for critical thinking. Is it really so hard to grasp

## The Illusion of ‘Social Slogans’

**Alexander Volodarsky**

**L**ike religious believers who discern the face of Christ in a dog’s backside, a piece of pizza or a bloodstain on a wall, some leftists have discovered a ‘social agenda’ in the Anti-Maidan...

For a left-wing intellectual to believe in a new October Revolution, he has to be shown a Real Worker. The dirtier and the more stupid the better, because in his imagination a Real Worker is always dirty, smelly, covered in scabs, and of course stupid (an intelligent worker awakens an inferiority complex in the left-wing ‘intellectual’). In this respect the left-wing populist is no different from the social racist who stigmatizes



that 'nationalisation' in a capitalist state that retains the system of wage labour will not improve the lives of working people but merely replace the individual capitalist by a collective capitalist consisting of state bureaucrats? But leftists continue to copy the recipes of 'real socialism' despite the fundamental changes that have occurred since then in both the economic and the political situation.

One of the victories of the Anti-Maidan movement in Kharkov, besides the beating up of defenseless people, is considered to be the inclusion in its programme of 'prohibition of the exploitation of others' labour'.

That sounds very progressive. But a consistent interpretation of 'prohibition of exploitation' must mean 'prohibition of wage labour'. Does the 'Kharkov Republic' intend to prohibit wage labour and transfer the means of production into the hands of the workers? There is no movement in this direction, even at the level of declarations. There are no strikes in the factories; there are no seizures of enterprises; the trade union cells are silent and new ones are not being formed. So by 'prohibition of exploitation' the people who signed off on this

point meant not a revolutionary change in relations of production but the prohibition of forcing people to overwork or to work without pay and enforcement of the labour norms specified in various legal codes. Prohibition of exploitation is a beautiful soap bubble that has no real political content in the context of the Anti-Maidan movement. Now the Ukrainian Stalinists have something to show their Western colleagues when they next ask for money for their 'revolution against the fascist junta' [in Kiev] – a splendid sham achievement for sham revolutionaries.

There are three kinds of

social demands: reformist, revolutionary and populist. Reformists try to change the system without encroaching on its foundations, by means of gradual transformations and compromises (among Ukrainian leftists this path was chosen by the Left Opposition). Revolutionary leftists see the solution to the problem in a basic change in the rules of play (in Ukraine only the anarchists consistently take this position).

As for populists, they do not propose solutions. Their goal is to appeal to potential voters with beautiful phrases. A populist can be inconsistent: it does not matter how often he contradicts himself, as in any case his programme is not meant to be implemented. He can therefore parasitise either on revolutionary or on reformist rhetoric. A classic case was the programme of the National-Socialist German Workers' Party. Leftists who are enthused with 'the people' and social slogans should recall this 'socialist workers' party with its red flag, appeals to 'the people' and unique social agenda. My impression is that were this party to appear again today it would certainly obtain the 'critical support' of the 'broad non-sectarian left'.

Source: <http://shiiitman.net/2014/04/14/illyuziya-sotsialny-h-lozungov/> (in Russian); original posted on April 14, translated by Stefan



*The second part of our series exposing the myths of Scottish nationalism.*

**J**une 24th marked the 700th anniversary of the Battle of Bannockburn which was just one of many battles between competing Anglo-Norman dynasties for the Scottish crown.

Separating myth from historical truth is no easy matter. Scottish nationalism starts from the assumption that Scotland was a nation from medieval times, if not earlier. Nationalists assert that Scotland achieved nationhood from the 'War of Independence' against the Edward the First, and William Wallace's victory at Stirling Bridge (1297), the battle of Bannockburn (1314), and the Declaration of Arbroath (1320) are presented as expressions of Scotland's national resistance against English colonialism.

The nationalist story of Scotland's past is that it has been a history of fighting to defend itself from England in a tale of freedom won, and freedom lost. Now with the Independence Referendum there is a chance of a separate state once more. It is, however, a fanciful notion that Scotland achieved national consciousness and nationhood in

medieval times in the 'War of Independence' against proud Edward's army.

Edward certainly sought to incorporate the territory of the kingdom of Scotland into his feudal empire. At first the means were peaceful. The Treaty of Birgham in 1290 set out terms of a future dynastic union through the marriage of Margaret, the 'Maid of Norway' to Edward's son. It recognised Scottish independence and the interests of the ruling nobility in Scotland would have been left unaffected. The merger was to be of crowns with no significant change for the commoners. However, Margaret died and this triggered a constitutional crisis in Scotland so with thirteen rival claims to the throne of Scotland, the barons turned to Edward to settle the dispute. He proclaimed himself lord paramount of Scotland, and decided that John Balliol had a better claim than Robert de Brus (Bruce the elder). John Balliol was accordingly



crowned king and duly paid homage to Edward in 1292.

Conflicts within the feudal elite in Scotland, and harsh demands made by Edward on his vassals, drove John Balliol into revolt after Edward haughtily ordered Balliol into military service in France. The Scots instead ratified a treaty with Edward's enemy, Philip IV, and war was inevitable. Edward was free to roam through Scotland taking control of castles and humiliating Balliol until the forced abdication of Balliol in 1296, stripping him of the royal emblems that earned Balliol the insulting name 'Toom Tabard' (Empty Tabard). He was sent to the Tower of London and thereafter spent the rest of his life in relatively comfortable exile. Edward's dominance over Scotland was total. He made over 2,000 freeholders swear allegiance to him, in a document which became known as the Ragman's Roll. Following several shifts of alliances, the feudal elite in Scotland began to turn the tables on Edward, beginning with William Wallace who never fought for an abstract 'people' or even 'nation', but always in the name of a legitimate power of which he was but the temporary protector or 'Guardian' – King John Balliol.

### 'Nationhood'

The kings and the nobility of Scotland were feudal lords, who did not even understand, let alone entertain, modern-day ideas of nationhood, nor could they. They



were possessed of a culture drawn from the Norman French, who married across the whole of the north-western part of Europe and were, in this sense, completely cosmopolitan. Their domains of exploitation, their rivalries and their commonalities invariably coincided. They were lords in Scotland who also held large tracts in England. For example, the Bruce family had ties both north and south of the border, the abbey of Guisborough in Northumberland was a Bruce foundation and they held 90,000 acres of land in Yorkshire, while John Balliol, held land in Normandy and England, as well as Scotland. Members of the nobility from the kingdom of Scotland, for example Bruce's rival, John Comyn, fought on the side of Edward in the conquest of Wales. The armies of Edward were recruited from his feudal realms in France, Wales and Ireland. The internecine struggles between competing feudal dynasties were based on the belief systems of the then-prevailing notions of fief and vassalage, not on the present-day concepts of nationhood. The lords in Scotland were engaged in a desperate struggle to defend and safeguard their traditional monopoly to exploit their estate serfs against the centralising power of Edward.

Robert the Bruce's conduct previous to Bannockburn was in no sense supporting the 'patriotic cause'. The young Robert Bruce brought up at Edward's court had been a favourite of Edward. He probably shared a mixture of the Anglo-French culture of northern England and south-eastern Scotland, and the Gaelic culture of Ulster, French being his paternal-tongue and Gaelic his maternal-tongue, and Latin his written language. The facts

speak for themselves. Both Bruce and his father supported Edward's invasion of Scotland in 1296, hoping to gain the crown after Balliol's fall. They were understandably disappointed when Edward proceeded to install himself as king. In 1297, Bruce raised the standard of revolt. However, his rising failed whereupon Bruce declined to join Wallace at Stirling Bridge and was also absent at the Battle of Falkirk, in which Wallace's army was devastated.

He, along with most Scottish nobles, changed sides on more than one occasion, depending upon how the wind blew. In 1302, he resigned as a Guardian of Scotland to make peace with Edward in order to marry the daughter of the de Burgh family of the Earldom of Ulster. Bruce, like all his family, had a complete belief in his right to the throne. However his actions of supporting alternately the English and Scottish armies had led to a great deal of distrust towards Bruce. His struggle for the Scottish crown wasn't an enterprise born of patriotism. Bruce's motives were more self-serving than that. The ascension of his family to royalty seemed more central to his long-term plans than Scottish liberation from English rule. His ambition was further thwarted by his chief political rival, John Comyn, known simply as the Red Comyn, and another lord of Norman origin who Bruce murdered in 1306. This set off a chain of events which led to both his excommunication and his coronation as king. He was most certainly a usurper so long as there was a legitimate heir of the Balliol family.

To attribute to the Declaration of Arbroath modern connotations of nationhood is as false as to impart similar meanings to the Magna

Carta. Both these documents should be seen for what they really were – an expression of the interests of barons from the respective kingdoms and their determination to hang on to their privileges against the monarch. The rhetoric of the Declaration of Arbroath – 'For as long as a hundred of us remain alive, we shall never on any conditions be subjected to the lordship of the English' – was never Bruce's rhetoric, for he had appealed to English lordship on more than one occasion.

A key passage in the Declaration runs thus:

'Yet if he [Robert the Bruce] shall give up what he has begun, seeking to make us or our kingdom subject to the king of England or to the English, we would strive at once to drive him out as our enemy and a subverter of his own rights and ours, and we would make some other man who was able to defend us our king; for, as long as a hundred of us remain alive, we will never on any conditions be subjected to the lordship of the English. For we fight not [for] glory, nor riches, nor honours, but for freedom alone, which no good man gives up without his life'.

The above passage has been represented by some as the prototype for modern nationalism. In truth, this passage suggests the function of the noble estate 'as the defender of the kingdom against the claims of the individual monarch in a way that was entirely typical of absolutist Europe' according to the historian Neil Davidson.

Its message was two-fold. First, it was directed at Edward II, informing him that it was pointless for him to attempt to depose Robert with a more subservient king, since the remainder of the Scottish aristocracy would not cease its resistance. Second, it

was addressed to Robert the Bruce, making it clear that, in consideration of his past record, they would not brook his jeopardising their interests – which lay in their god-given right to unhindered exploitation of the peasants – through making concessions to Edward.

Bruce at Bannockburn never fought for the people of Scotland – he fought to place a crown upon his head.

**ALJO**

*Next month: concluding article, on the Covenanters.*



# Not 'sound money' but 'no money'

*The author of *Gold Wars* reviewed in last month's issue replies and we discuss capitalism, banking, economic crises and money with him and come to similar conclusions.*

**Kelley Mitchell:** DAP's review in the *Socialist Standard* of my book *Gold Wars* is much appreciated. The review quite rightly pointed out a few errors in the book, especially regarding the phrasing I chose. First, it's correct that negative economic cycles occur under a loosely defined 'gold standard'. I should have written that they tend to be more muted because sound money has a negative feedback effect on speculative frenzies. However, under a strict gold-backed system, a bank run is not possible, because any currency issued would have proper backing. When such crises happened (and I cover several in the book) the banks were not practicing a true gold standard. They were practicing a fractional reserve gold standard. In other words, there has been no genuine gold standard of fully-backed money for hundreds of years.

My fundamental concern is that socialists and others who sincerely want a better world can do nothing if they fail to properly understand the world we are in. The banking system is needlessly and deliberately opaque. This 'fog of war' exists to confuse and bore people. The creation of money is an essential topic for those who object to the capitalist system. You must know how it favours the powers that be. Those who control the supply of money have tilted the deck to assure the increase of elite power. Democracy has become a mere facade, with powerless voting placating the masses while monetary creation dictates all government action. Anyone who considers this a false 'conspiracy theory' is woefully ignorant of the nature and manifestation of power in the current capital dominated world.

**Socialist Standard:** The real issue is whether reforming the monetary system in some way will solve the problems of the market. We've seen nothing (and certainly no evidence) to suggest this is the case. In fact, world capitalism throughout its history has produced a long list of monetary reformers of various sorts: advocates of both inflation and deflation, those who support a gold standard, the followers of Major Douglas and Social Credit, those who believe in abolishing interest payments – yet none of these have ever succeeded in removing the problems of the market economy, including its periodic crises

and slumps.

This is because the problem with capitalism is not its financial superstructure. That's a bit like saying the problem with smallpox is only the scabs it produces – the problem is production for profit itself, the market economy, not particular features of it. Crises and slumps with their attendant unemployment and poverty are entirely normal for capitalism. They are not an aberration but the way the system rids itself of inefficient units of production so it can expand further in future.

**KM:** The review says 'Mitchell repeats some of the myths about the power of the banks to create massive multiples of credit out of nothing'. This comment is quite puzzling to me. The author fails to specify which 'myths' he means. Is it possible for the Central Bank to create as much money as they wish or not? If not, what possible real world constraint exists? There are technical restrictions on fractional reserve lending, but as I detail in the book, these do not apply in all countries, nor do they apply to the shadow banking system.

**SS:** Hopefully you will forgive us if we do not again go into the issue here of why commercial banks can't create near endless amounts of credit from a given deposit base. We have spent much time on this in recent years already – we refer him to the issue of the *Socialist Standard* in October 2012 as an example of where this was dealt with in several articles and in quite some depth.

**KM:** I do take some objection to the phrase 'conspiracy theory' regarding the ideas in the book. The phrasing is not used in the book, nor do I consider it a valid description. The term is used pejoratively by most analysts to deride theories they find objectionable without having to resort to deeper analysis. The review does, in fact, provide a certain degree of analysis – more than most of my critics, but still falls short in certain areas. Most notably, the review fails to see that I never advocate a gold standard. And if it is a conspiracy theory to point out that manipulation has occurred, then we should sharply question the regulators who have fined most commercial banks for

secretly manipulating the LIBOR and Barclays for manipulating the gold market. In fact, they have ended the London gold fix on that basis – a fact that the review neglects to mention. To be fair, the writer probably didn't hear about this recent official confirmation of the gold suppression. (They did, however, blame it on a lone gunman, as usual, a theory that is absurd considering the scale and variety of manipulation.)

Most gold suppression theorists are fiercely capitalist, with a bizarre faith in something called the free market. I hold that such an animal is like a griffin – it does not exist, nor can it because of a fundamental contradiction. In a completely free market, the government (and regulations) would be simply another commodity to be purchased by those with money. Regulations would arise to punish smaller competitors, destroying any free market. Contrariwise, to prevent that situation would require stopping companies from purchasing desired regulations – but that would be an interference in the free market, as well. Hence, no free market is possible.

**SS:** You are right that your book didn't explicitly advocate a gold standard, but it is certainly implicit throughout, hence the reason we said Mitchell 'seems to be part of this group' of theorists. It also emerges that your definition of a gold standard is rather different to the conventional one, though our point about booms and busts happening when currency is convertible into gold still stands. The idea of capitalism being able to generate sufficient capital flows and liquidity in a system where all currency is either gold itself or 100 percent backed by gold at all times is truly fantastical – indeed, it has never happened. It is no more likely than capitalism without bank deposits, credit and interest, as these all help propel the mass circulation of commodities in world markets, the levels of labour productivity associated with this, and necessary flows of capital investment. You rightly point out that the pure free-market beloved of the Austrian school of economists is a myth but so is capitalism without conventional banking and the paraphernalia that

goes with it.

For the record, the article was written about a fortnight before it emerged Barclays had been fined for the part played by an alleged 'rogue trader' of gold in their dealing rooms. It has also recently come to light that under pressure from the financial authorities in Germany, Deutsche Bank has now left the gold fix syndicate completely. So the 'fix' is set to change dramatically under pressure from governments. If there has been a conspiracy (or collusion) to manipulate the price of gold, it is comparatively peripheral to the operation and survival of capitalism and something governments can and will deal with when necessary. In many ways this is just as they periodically deal with the effects of other cartels that get in the way of the wider interests of the owning class.

**KM:** The review continues 'Mitchell has failed to understand that the expansion and contraction of the credit system that he is fixated on, and its attendant asset bubbles, is a reflection of the underlying trade cycle of the market economy and is not its cause. This instead is the drive by firms to sell commodities at a profit as if the demand for them is unlimited, leading to over-expansion of the booming sectors of the economy. This overproduction leads to cut-backs, hoarding and lay-offs and the monetary and credit systems are what transmits these effects throughout the economy more widely.' The author makes a common analytical mistake. He believes such cycles have only a single possible cause. He also ignores the positive feedback mechanism wherein the effect and the cause reinforce each other. He is correct that expansion and contraction are normal parts of the business cycle – I never claimed otherwise. I contend that gross expansion of the money supply leads to 'sloshing liquidity' and out of control mal-investment. The over-expansion of certain sectors is hugely exacerbated by excess money printing and so-called 'hot money' flows. The impossibly high valuations of the real estate market would never have occurred under a gold standard. They happened because banks were lending Other People's Money and cheaply created money to anyone with a pulse. As evidence, the only group pointing out the crisis beforehand (and they were correct) were the Austrian school – most of whom agree with my fundamental thesis of gold market manipulation with the intent of maintaining the

currency monopoly.

**SS:** True enough, the cause of each particular crisis will naturally vary. In recent decades we have seen at different times the over-investment in – and over-expansion of – the housing market, the commercial property market, the car industry, the steel industry and micro-electronics to name just a few. But the fundamental point is that it is the competitive drive to accumulate capital by firms operating in a 'dog-eat-dog' economy with no social regulation of production that leads to these. The most recent crisis and slump was not caused by a malfunction of the banking system – that was an early product of it, albeit one that then severely exacerbated the situation. Without the profit-driven over-expansion and then collapse of the housing market, which then turned the credit and derivatives that were based on it bad, the banking crisis wouldn't have happened as it did. And we might add it was some of the opponents of capitalism who saw it coming:

'[A]s the US housing market falters, more sub-prime loans are going bad . . . The bursting of America's housing bubble could have widespread impacts on US financial institutions and others who have exposure there . . . the entire housing bubble phenomenon is wider than commonly supposed – while the US and UK economies have a particular problem with their housing markets, so do many other countries where identifiable bubbles also exist, from Ireland and Spain to New Zealand . . . When the crash comes, it will return markets to more realistic levels that are more in line with real incomes and values, and this is what has happened on every other previous occasion'. (*Forever Blowing Bubbles*, *Socialist Standard*, May 2007).

This was published several months before the crisis broke and a full 18 months before the Lehman Brothers implosion. It was an analysis using Marxian economics as a tool for understanding how capitalism works – one that leads socialists to recognise the inherent dynamic of the market economy as being the problem not part of the solution (unlike the 'laissez-faire' Austrian school of economics whose advocates want even more market madness, red in tooth and claw).

**KM:** I quite agree with the review that all monetary systems, whether gold backed or fiat, lead to concentration of power in the hands of the few at the expense of the

many. My book is solely descriptive of the shape that concentration has taken since the abolition of any gold convertibility in 1971. My fondest desire is for the abolition of money altogether and for completely shared resources by all humanity. You can call it socialism, communism, the gift economy, or whatever you like – the name is irrelevant. It would vastly increase the lifestyle for everyone (even the rich) and lower the drain on earth's resources because most goods would not sit idle – they would be common property. Further, it would end the odious cycle of converting genuine resources into wilfully obsolete garbage for profit. Goods would be durable and engineers would take pride in that. The most common crime – property theft – would no longer exist. It would be a better world. In fact, the original book concluded with a lengthy critique of capitalism and a prescription – the Resource Based Economy – for a fully equitable system.

**SS:** A book, of course, can only be reviewed on the basis of what it says. It is genuinely pleasing to see you agree that the only real solution to the problems caused by capitalism is the establishment of a society of common ownership and production for use where the market has been abolished. The trouble is that you would never know this from reading your book. In its 256 pages there is not a single reference to any of this. If there had been the book would have received a rather different review from us. Instead we have a book which ends by saying that in the 'gold wars' to come 'the best ammunition is gold'. Not much of an option for the wage and salary earners who make up the working class majority in society.

We feel you have a choice to make. Either you continue to advocate the case for gold (whatever precisely that may be) or you advocate the case for socialism. We suspect that you now realise you wrote a book making the case for the former (possibly encouraged by your publishers), while coming to the conclusion that the latter is the real and lasting solution to the chaos of the market. Not 'sound money' but 'no money' if you will. We invite you to think seriously about this and join us in spreading the idea of a sustainable, human-centered alternative to capitalism. That is, one where markets and prices have been replaced by production directly geared to satisfying people's needs and desires.

# A Resource Based Economy

**This is the chapter by Kelly Mitchell omitted from his book *Gold Wars*, and we publish it here alongside his letter to us.**

*'Economy means efficiency - a lack of waste'* Peter Joseph

Imagine a world without telemarketers, without advertising, without someone trying to sell you something constantly, without a propaganda industry trying to convince everyone their empty lives will be filled by the latest gadget/fragrance/object, without logos, and without soulless consumption. Imagine a world without money. Money is useful as a medium of exchange, but a world where all human needs (and most reasonable desires) are readily fulfilled is only possible without money. We are the sole species that pays to live on this planet. This society would simply terminate private property as an arcane, useless and even wasteful fixation. The age of ownership would recede into memory – a necessary, but immature phase in our societal growth. Sounds insane, right? But if all human needs can be met, if most non-harmful and physically possible desires can be universally met, then property would be pointless – merely a pathetic, failed means to bolster the self-worth of adult children. Such a world moves through purpose, not paper. It is sustainable. It's called a Resource Based Economy (RBE). The ethic of the resource based economy is to align with natural law. We cannot consume past



the earth's ability to provide. An RBE catalogs and utilizes planetary resources in the most efficient method we can create for the good of all humanity. Money is not necessary and everyone has access to all goods and services. Planetary resources cannot be claimed by individuals, but are publicly owned. Many proponents of the system now exist, most notably the *Zeitgeist* Movement.

Conceptual cities have been detailed with full energy independence, complete food self-sufficiency, and awesomely convenient public transportation. Designed cities can have immensely higher efficiencies than the ad hoc ones currently in use. They can maximize human satisfaction through good planning, clean air, water, and organic food. This would not restrict anyone living in the country and fully utilizing technology, either. All choices are voluntary – there is no coercion. If someone is using property, it is not available for others, of course. But no one could own immense tracts of land, letting them lie fallow with no public access.

Certain mandatory measures toward a more

sustainable direction must be met – the economy must change from a growth to a steady state economy. 1) The monetary system must be eliminated – it creates scarcity. 2) We must move from a competitive to a collaborative model. This will eliminate redundant products, just for monetary competition. It will also eliminate inferior products because all players have full knowledge access and there is no financial incentive to build junk. In a collaborative world, every innovation can draw on all knowledge – nothing is proprietary or withheld. 3) Total open source knowledge. Centralization of knowledge requires distribution of production, but in a coordinated manner. Locally produced goods would be available for all needs. Earth could be catalogued and inventoried as per resources and energy supplies. Action could be taken well ahead of time to avert crisis. A simple form of this is feasible right now, but knowledge is proprietary and resources are owned by elites. Open-source knowledge would eliminate duplication of efforts and mass resource wasting. It would allow for the best understanding and processes to emerge without the current artificial constraints. Global collaboration would overcome the barriers of competition and proprietary knowledge. Humanity would experience an explosion of progress in knowledge, ideas, ideologies, and technology. Eliminating the monetary system would remove the need to suppress competitive technologies like alternative energy (which threatens big oil). Without the need to create energy scarcity for oil profits, those technologies would no longer be restricted.

4) Deliberate automation. The economy is headed to automation already. Artificial means of creating jobs exist (largely as public sector workers), just because the capitalist system demands work for pay. Virtually all factory workers could be replaced in a few years. All jobs with no social benefit (Wall Street, finance, and so many public sector jobs) would be pointless. 65 percent of all jobs could be eliminated with current knowledge right now. Productivity is inverse to employment. The higher the productivity, the lower the employment. It's a marketplace function – people are much more expensive than machines. They need a house, food, car, etc. Machines only need their raw energy inputs and maintenance. Some machines can even repair themselves.

5) Eliminate property rights in favor of universal access for all goods and services. If all goods and services are freely available, multiple problems are instantly eliminated. Shared resources create abundance – nothing is 'owned' by individuals without ever being used. Nothing sits idle, so all that idle time is now useful time, requiring only a tiny percentage of current material goods to fully satisfy all human needs. Hoarding uses an enormous amount of resources. A car in constant use takes care of 20 people instead of 1. The problem of theft is entirely eliminated – if no one owns anything (or everyone owns everything) theft is pointless. 98 percent of all crime would disappear overnight. We can provide an excellent quality of life for all humans many times over, while eliminating war, crime, poverty, destitution and displacement. There is no need for any of that.

Many people have the feeling that the idea of a resource based economy is actually quite good, but it could never

work. Obviously, an unlimited list of tedious procedural 'problems' can be drafted – what about people wanting land to homestead, for example? Rural versus urban vehicle use? Vandalism? But such a list are merely wrinkles to iron out through human ingenuity. The most common significant objections are some variation of the following: 1) This is communism. 2) It's utopian. 3) It's dystopian - a machine governed, totalitarian prone society / technocracy. 4) Owning private property is fundamental to human life and society. 5) People will not be motivated to do unpleasant and dangerous jobs. 6) It's overwhelming. 7) The powers will never let it happen.

Some of these are valid concerns; some are merely philosophical dislikes. It's difficult to give complete answers because we are talking about a total restructure of society on a global level. Let's take the objections one at a time.

1) This is Communism! An RBE is not communism. First, capitalism and communism are not mutually exclusive systems - they work in tandem within a society. If we call any socialized project a shade of communism (as some do), then the military is a perfect example. It performs, in theory, a societal benefit - it defends the country. All the people pay for it through taxes. The military is the ultimate socialist institution. Roads, schools, hospitals, courts, police - many of the things we take for granted are socialized - paid for by the public and there (ostensibly) for the public good. Most people drive, want clean air, land and water in their town, need to feel safe, and believe in education as a right. These are socialist values, and they can exist right alongside of capitalist values of earning a living, owning property, and engaging in the marketplace economy. In fact, every family is communist – do children pay rent? Do they work? No – in a family, the unspoken rule is 'from each according to his abilities, to each according to his needs.' One parent makes the money, the other takes care of the house, and the kids eat and live for free and go to school. Capitalism simply makes no sense for the internal operating structure of a family.

More to the point of the resource based economy, however – it is not Communism because the labor supply side is totally missing. The labor is supplied primarily by machines. Certainly, some workers will be needed for planning and maintenance, but many, many people simply enjoy these activities. They will volunteer. People like work and they love to feel meaning in their work. Moreover, it's not 'to each according to his needs.' Each person has full access to anything they currently have - and a whole lot more. Because goods are well-made and communally owned, they are always available and far more durable.

2) It's utopian. This criticism stems from the fact that people do not have to work and have all needs provided. While true, there is far more needed for a 'utopian' society. People will still have to deal with innate meaning, relationships, personal development and other social concerns. An RBE could never hope to solve such issues, but it can create far better opportunities for us to work on them, rather than being imprisoned in an increasingly senseless monetary system.

3) It's dystopian. This comes from the notion that it will be a centrally planned system, subject to political tyranny by controllers. While the need for central administration is obvious in terms of resource logistics, distribution and manufacturing, it need not translate into a political control. In any system, preventing dictators from seizing political control is incumbent on the population itself. People must remain aware. No economic system is immune. In fact, the monetary system of control allows for far easier dictatorial control because it creates an

impossibly disproportionate distribution of wealth. A few people who control trillions of dollars and even the creation of currency exert so much control that the citizenry is rendered powerless. That is the current situation and it is a definition of oligarchical dictatorship. The people have no true voice, only the illusion.

4) Owning property is fundamental to humans. This



**Automation**

is completely false. Ownership is largely an illusion - all you have is temporary possession and use. Even pre-historical societies were completely egalitarian – all possessions were commonly owned. Societies exist now without individual property rights – all resources are communally owned. They function on a tribal scale, so the challenge is to scale up. It is a formidable challenge, no doubt, but it is doable, if we all see the virtue and strive toward it. People do not need property or possessions, they need and desire the benefits of these things. If you always have access to a home and privacy within that, or to a sailboat, why would you want the individual expense of owning it? Even property taxes would cease - no one would complain about that. A limited 'ownership' would still exist – mainly the right to use something as long as needed. What other point is there to ownership?

5) Motivation. The basic problem is conceiving of an RBE through the lens of current reward system programming. As Dan Pink's book *Drive* showed, monetary incentives create a detrimental effect in terms of motivation and creativity. True motivators are autonomy, mastery and purpose. In an RBE, a sense of civic duty toward humanity would be easy to cultivate. Many people have such a desire already - it's why we have philanthropy and volunteerism. Most difficult, dangerous and unpleasant jobs would be machine-doable anyway. All we would need is the technological push, which would come readily through complete open-source knowledge.

6) It's overwhelming. Very true - the project is inconceivably massive. Most people drop it initially but if they come across the ideas again, it seems more appealing. The concept is so alien to our current social programming that it feels a bit repugnant, strange, incomprehensible, or absurd. All I can do is encourage you to take an open mind and just ponder it – dream a bit about the profound human potential. Any large task can seem overwhelming, but with many people, it becomes possible. And with enough people, it becomes inevitable. Even a total restructure of society can be done if we all wish it.

Now is the time for a change. As Barack Obama told the banking CEO's, 'My administration is the only thing between you and the pitchforks.' People are angry. The system is teetering. Power is shifting. The world is almost ready for a major change. If a determined global movement pushes, a simple move of capitalist power from West to East can be diverted to a more fundamental

paradigm shift.

7) The powers will prevent it. This assumes they can prevent it. They can certainly hinder it, but powerful ideas, when they take hold, live longer than people. The current 'leaders' will die and be replaced. Eventually a more conciliatory group will emerge, subject to a nascent ideology. From that perspective, we make a better world not for ourselves, but our children. We will never see it, but it is worth all the more for that. On a more immediate frame - leaders cannot resist a truly determined, awakened populace. Our leaders have ruled by some assumption that they (or a person's chosen subset) have better insights into managing society. That illusion is failing fast. Politicians are almost universally despised and seen as corrupt. No one trusts them to make decisions that honestly benefit society. They are no better than the average person and often they are far, far worse. All it will take is the people to unify under a greater vision - and that's the real challenge of a resource based economy. People have enormous resistance based on previous societal conditioning. However, in a very immediate sense (the next few years), a paradigm shift is happening. Political power is being drained from the corrupted West and headed to an East anxious to prove its integrity - to gain the world's trust so that it can take the mantle of leadership by popular approval. In such a power shift, ideological doctrines have a way of inserting themselves and gaining serious traction. At a deeper level, capitalism may be unsustainable for the reasons listed above, especially on a planet with a ballooning population. From that perspective, all that is needed is to wait for the real collapse, educating as many people as we can in the meantime.

It may sound too good to be possible, but that is just a thought. It may be the only rational solution to our current predicament - for all its power, the monetary system has become open failure, detrimental to humanity. We may be forced to develop an RBE just to maintain a decent standard of life. We have based our society on 'enlightened self-interest', only to find that is a chimera - a totally self-interested society devolves into narcissism and vulgar consumption. Our choice may boil down to global abundance or global destruction. In the end, all that limits us is our ability to transcend our social programming. If we can see a better world, one where basic goodness is known to live in every being, one where global abundance exists by the simple generosity of sharing - like we teach children to do, one where 'conservative' means to not waste resources and destroy the place, one where we do not own the Earth because you cannot own your mother, one where hubris becomes humility and greed becomes gratitude - if we can visualize such a world, we can make it real.

#### **Comment:**

**Much of this of course, we can agree with. Except we would point out that the type of society described here has always accurately been referred to as socialism or communism, as they mean the same thing - the social or common ownership of the means of living. That so-called 'Communist' countries (really systems of state-run capitalism) like the former USSR, China, East Germany, etc abused the term is not in our view a reason to disassociate ourselves from it. After all, these states called themselves 'democratic' too!**

**Regarding, the Zeitgeist Movement, we agree there are a number of positive features of this loosely structured organization, but there are sadly many problems with it too. Not the least of which is its lack of democratic internal attitudes and structures, as well as the fact a great many TZM members - arguably the majority - have views more focused on attempts to reform capitalism (and its banking system, etc) than on the only solution to the social and economic problems of our time - real socialism.**

#### **Editors**



## **Imperialism?**

CAPITAL IS value that expands. As self-expanding value capital is naturally imperialistic. Expansion is the essential process of capitalism. Capital expands via concentration (expanded reproduction through successive investments of a portion of surplus value realized as profit over and above consumption by the capitalist class) and centralization (whereby one capital kills many). And it always looks out for low-cost sourcing - cheaper sources of productive resources and labour-power on the one hand, and for upbeat profitable markets on the other. This is how the empire of capital expands. Therefore, every region of the capitalist world, developed or underdeveloped, small or large, is potentially expansionist or imperialist. Every aliquot part of the global capital is intrinsically expansive - imperialistic. Capital is global from its inception. It is not a national or regional entity. It has to be understood as a dominantly global entity.

A contrary treatment of capitalism is utterly misleading. The problem of our world is not imperialism, it is capitalism.

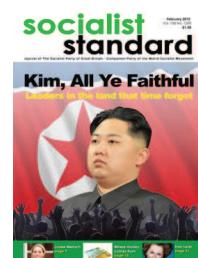
Capital is not a thing at rest; it is a circuit describing process continuously passing through three distinctive forms - money capital → productive capital → commodity capital - constantly reproducing its exploitative, oppressive, wasteful and alienating relations of production and distribution. Capitalists as we see them (individual, joint-stock, state, etc.) are but capital personified. They are merely the functionaries of capital. Capital grows unevenly via a centre/periphery framework and relation - some regions being highly industrialized centres while others remaining mostly raw material providers. And capital is inherently anarchic and self-contradictory moving through perpetual cycles of boom and slump.

Nobody could ever accurately predict about, and effectively administer, the anarchic behaviour of the capitalist socio-economic system. As Marx pointed out, 'The essence of bourgeois society consists precisely in this, that a priori there is no conscious social regulation of production. The rational and the naturally necessary asserts itself only as a blindly working average.' (Marx's letter to L. Kugelman, July, 1868)

Capital is an active social force. And we know as Engels knew, 'Active social forces work exactly like natural forces, blindly, forcibly, destructively'; in spite of us, in opposition to us, they master us 'so long as we do not understand and reckon with them.' (*Anti-Dühring*, Progress Publishers, Moscow 1969, p. 331)

This is true for every region of the world. You cannot do away with this pattern of capitalist growth.

You can, however, do away with capital itself with all its paraphernalia only by organizing world socialism only.  
**BINAY SARKAR**



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- in depth
- in touch
- insight

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## Burston Strike School Museum

*The Burston Strike School Museum, Church Green, Burston, Norfolk (free admission, open all reasonable hours (key at adjacent bungalow)) website: <http://burstonstrikeschool.wordpress.com>*

PRE-VISIT PUBLICITY gives a rather misleading impression of the Burston Strike School Museum and its setting in the village of Burston, near Diss, in Norfolk. This is not a charming rural community but a straggling suburban development of retirement bungalows and nouveau-rich villas, interspersed with a few ropey farmsteads, home to a particularly unpleasant agribusiness installation. As such, the museum and the annual rally on the pocket handkerchief village green are rather incongruous. The large-scale rural poverty once found in this area is no more because the formerly ubiquitous ragged farm labourer, whose existence the Museum recalls, is no longer required. They have been discreetly bundled off to hidden estates in the market towns or to the mean streets of the run-down coastal resorts.

The Museum competently tells the story of the events leading to the Burston School Strike in 1914 when the teachers at the local school, Annie and Tom Higdon, were sacked after a dispute with management. The petty powers had objected to their industrial and political activities, and, led by the local priest, enacted the dismissal of the Higdons from their posts on trumped up grounds. The teachers were supported by the local farm workers, whose cause the Higdons had valiantly espoused. Pupils were withdrawn from the school as a protest (thus the strike was not an ordinary industrial one). Although unthinkable today, there was a rash of so-called Schoolboy Strikes in the years immediately before the First World War (see, for example, Dave Marson's excellent 1973 pamphlet *Children's Strikes in 1911*), so this was not an entirely isolated outburst.

The Higdons set up their own alternative school in a tent on the village green. Later the school moved to local carpenter's premises and then to a purpose-built school financed by donations from the labour movement, and it is this building which now houses the museum. The Burston Strike School carried on teaching local children

until shortly after Tom Higdon's death in 1939, becoming, therefore, the longest running 'strike' in British history.

The displays in the museum, recently renewed to commemorate the centenary of the start of the children's strike are well maintained and informative in the conventional narrative style. A recent acquisition is a charming and entirely relevant bronze casting of one of the original Strike School chairs by Norwich artist Louise Richardson. The exhibition is backed up by extensive literature, which is on sale at the museum or online, including reproductions of *The Burston Strike School* by Casey (originally published by the Independent Labour Party) and T.G. Higdon's *The Burston Rebellion*, as well as *A Striking Village*, which provides interesting background material. The latter

was written by members of the Potter family, whose ancestor, Violet, led the schoolchildren in 1914. There is also an excellent range of postcards as well as well-designed mugs and pencils.

There have been additional events during the centenary year, including the Burston Community Primary School six week project that culminated in a re-enactment of the original candlestick march round the village. On their arrival on the Green they were greeted by 'Mr and Mrs Higdon' from *The Stuff of Dreams* Theatre Company's production of their new play *The Bricks of Burston*. The annual Burston Strike Rally will take place on 7th September 2014. This year it will be addressed by Owen Jones, author of *Chavs: The Demonization of the Working Class*. There will also be music from the NASUWT Band, and Thee Faction, an R&B band.

Younger children especially will, doubtless, gain something from a visit to the museum. However, overall, the impression is of the quaintness of the past, of white pinafore dresses and tight lace up boots, of strange and antiquated hand tools and odd facial hair. To the discerning visitor, however, much is left wanting.

Leaving aside footnote enquiries, such as details about the donors commemorated by the foundation stones lining the front of the Burston Strike School Museum building, whose brief inscriptions hint at fascinating untold stories, there is vital historical information which one needs for a full understanding of the case. Particularly, one would like to know the nature of the alternative education provided in the 'Free School'. Besides being 'nice', what was this? The cursory treatment of this phrase is particularly disappointing because it was the duration of the school, a whole quarter century, which makes the incident noteworthy. In the era of McDonaldisation of education, independent education for the working class ought to be a particularly relevant issue.

And it is the failure to create links between the past and the present which makes the Burston Strike School Museum, like the People's History Museum in Manchester, a failure. History is never finished business, done and dusted. Only by analysing society, how it came to be and how it is, can we hope to advance to a better future.

**KAZ**

# Oliver: a fagin nuisance

*It has come to our notice that whilst researching through the effects of an unknown derelict in a London workhouse a completely unreliable socialist has come across the following two part dialogue purporting to be the work of an unsuccessful legal clerk.*

F: WELL, young gentleman an' 'ow are we this mornin'?

O: Very well, sir. Thank you sir.

F: Ooh! We are quite the gentleman. Ain't we, Oliver. Not rough and ready like my other young gentlemen. No not at all. Quite the gentleman.

O: When will I be going to work, Sir? Like Dodger and the others.

F: Ah work, Oliver. Perhaps you is too great the gentleman to be working with the likes of us, my boy.

O: Oh no, sir. I'll work, sir. They taught me at the workhouse that work is an honourable thing, sir.

F: I don't doubt it, my boy. They are the great ones the workhouse for feeding you on platitudes. And very little else by the looks of you. Taught you 'the meek shall inherit the earth', did they, Oliver?

O: Oh yes, sir.

F: Hee ... Hee... 'Blessed be the poor'.

O: Oh yes, sir.

F: Taught you the parable about the rich man and the camel entering the eye of a needle, did they, Oliver?

O: Oh yes, sir. I remember that one.

F: Hee ... Hee ... That's a good 'un. That's one of their finest. How does it go, young Oliver? The parable. Tell me that one. That's a good un.

No mistake. First class that one.

O: Well, sir if I recall correctly.

F: Recall? Yes that's the fine talking. Well recall, recall, my boy.

O: Well, sir. It will be easier for a camel to pass through the eye of an needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven.

F: Capital. That's capital. Really, Oliver. And what do you make of that parable?

O: Well sir. I'm not sure. What is a parable?

F: Oh, it's all parables in the workhouse, my boy. The widders mite, bread on the waters, the

good samaritan, the prodigal son. Oh, yes very strong on parables .... and corporal punishment and hard labour..... very, very strong.

O: Excuse me, sir. What is a parable?

F: Well let me see, Oliver. Parable is a story. Usually a very far fetched one. Usually the opposite of the real world. Cast your bread on the waters and they return tenfold. That's a good un .... Hee ...Hee ... Cast your bread on the waters and all you get is soggy bread. But, no. Not in parables. Everything is the opposite in parables. Parables are stories. Religious stories. I suppose parables are religious fairy tales. But the camel and the needle. What does yir make of that un? Eh, Oliver, my boy.

O: I think, sir. It means rich men would find it difficult to get into heaven because a camel would be too large to get through the eye of an needle.

F: Sharp, Oliver. Very sharp indeed, my boy. You're a clever un, and no mistake. But, Oliver what would a camel be doing wanting through the eye of an needle? Having no acquaintance with that creature I would not know its desires ... but all parables strike me as strange. A thread through the eye of an needle.

Yes that is useful. But a camel.

What would you sew with that?

O: A camel-haired coat.

F: A camel-haired coat?

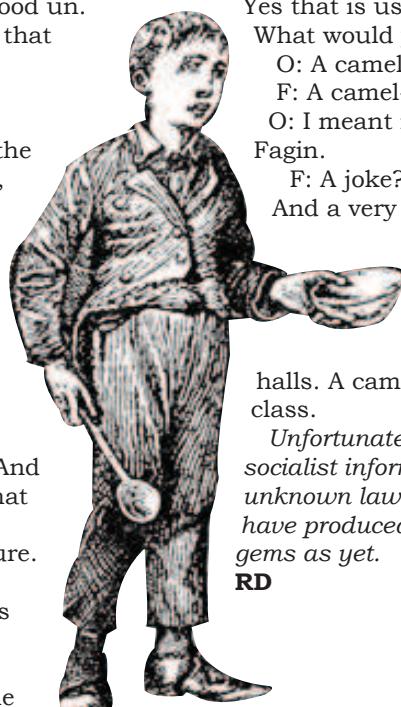
O: I meant it as a joke, Mr Fagin.

F: A joke? Of course a joke. And a very good un too, Oliver

my boy. My aren't you the sharp one. You should be making your fortunes on the halls. A camel-haired coat. First class.

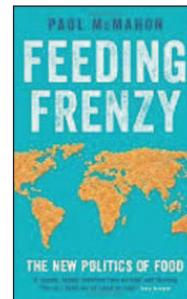
*Unfortunately the unreliable socialist informs us that the unknown law clerk's belongings have produced no more literary gems as yet.*

RD



## Enough Food for All

**Paul McMahon: Feeding Frenzy: The New Politics of Food. Profile £8.99.**



This volume contains a great deal of solid information about the production and distribution of food, from the origins of agriculture to the massive price rises in 2007 and the current global dominance of the food industry by four multinational trading corporations.

McMahon makes it clear that, although one human in eight goes hungry each year, enough food is grown today to feed over nine billion people, the projected population by 2050. To increase what is available for human consumption, food waste can be reduced, and cereals used to feed people rather than animals. Much more land can be brought under cultivation (albeit requiring a lot of effort in many cases), and in particular crop yields can be dramatically increased. In parts of sub-Saharan Africa, for instance, the amount of food produced could be at least doubled, were it not for such things as lack of knowledge, lack of access to technology and dysfunctional markets. As he says, 'the problems are made by humans, not nature'.

Food production is subject to the vagaries of the weather and climate change in a way that is not the case with other products. Thus the area around the Black Sea (parts of Ukraine, Russia and Kazakhstan) has become a major supplier of grain, but its climate is more variable than that of North America: a heatwave there in 2010 decimated the harvest. What this shows is the extent to which food supplies are becoming globalised, with shortfalls in one area being made up by increased production elsewhere.

Another safeguard against poor harvests is the maintenance of food reserves, but even these are used as geopolitical weapons. Thus China is estimated to hold three-quarters of the world's reserves of rice and maize (though the exact amount is a state secret). China is in fact now the biggest single importer of American agricultural products, and US food exporting is becoming more and more geared to this export trade, with railways being built so that enormously-long goods trains can

transport soybeans and maize to the Pacific coast for shipping to China.

Here is how McMahon describes a framework for solving the earth's food problems: 'Imagine that there are no borders, no economic disparities, no unequal power relationships within society. Instead, pretend that the planet is a single system that can be optimally managed to deliver food and other services for humanity.' He sees this as a 'fantasy world', but in fact it is not so different from how socialism could be organised to address food and other issues.

**PB**

## Spanish miners

**Resistenciaminera photographs by Javier Bauluz and Marcos Martinez, the Durham Miners' Association, 2012, 56 pages, £20.**

This exquisite photographic volume by Javier Bauluz and Marcos Martinez is supported by the Spanish Miners' Solidarity Committee UK, the NUM, the Durham Miners' Association, the National Justice for Mineworkers Campaign and the anti-fascist organisation Hope not Hate. These organisations, working closely together during the 2012 strike in Spain, collected and sent €33,400 to the Spanish miners' unions in solidarity with the striking miners and their families.

On 30 May 2012, Spanish miners' unions called an indefinite strike to force the country's government to negotiate over an immediate 63 percent cut in aid to the coal

industry. The photographic booklet documents the 65 days of the strike by the 9,000 miners in Asturias, Leon and Aragon. The Spanish state deployed the Guardia Civil to the coal mining valleys of Asturias where on a daily basis they used tear gas, baton charges, and rubber bullets against striking coalminers, who resorted to using stones, nuts, bolts, slingshots and fireworks issued from



**Javier Bauluz and Marcos Martinez**

home-made rocket launchers. The photographs portray the roadblocks, pitched battles in pit villages, rallies, demonstrations, the march on Madrid which is all reminiscent of the 1984-85 Miners' Strike in Britain. John Cunningham of the Spanish Miners Solidarity Committee wrote that the 'NUM owe an enormous debt of gratitude to the Spanish trade unions and particularly the miners for their solidarity and financial support in 1984-85.' In 2012 a Spanish coal miner said 'this is not the first time miners have fought for all workers.'

We look forward to the day when the Spanish coalminers inscribe on their banner the revolutionary watchword 'Abolicion del sistema de salarios'.

**SPC**

## 'The Socialist Party and the First World War'

The premier to be at EC meeting on Saturday **2 August 2014**

To open Monday **4 August 2014** at Head Office

The exhibition will feature the September 1914 *Socialist Standard* front page statement 'The War and the Socialist Position', the Defence of the Realm Act & Regulation No.27 (November 1914) and the SPGB/ *Socialist Standard*, SPGB propaganda in WW1, Conscientious Objection and the tribunals eg *Socialist Standard* May 1916 – Watford Branch and Conscientious Objection tribunal 'Crabbed Age and Youth' article, the SPGB and the Bolsheviks in London 'Maximovich' (Lenin and Litvinov) – *Socialist Standard* March 1915, fleeing the country (Adolph Kohn & Moses Baritz - the foundation of the companion parties), and the prisoners of conscience: The case of imprisoned Party members at Dartmoor Prison.



## Hunger For Anger

'ANGRY CUSTOMERS! Angry motorists! Angry countryfolk! Angry couples!', all set to an urgent techno soundtrack and growling narration. Watching Channel 5's

*Angry Britain: Mean Streets* is

like getting a testosterone-and-adrenaline-fuelled smack in the mouth. The programme hits us with scenes of public violence filmed mostly on smartphones and camcorders. For example, to show that our roads are a 'cesspit of hatred', a vigilante cyclist records his various altercations with irate, bleeped-out drivers. The show is so eager to make the point that Britain is 'a place where rage is all the rage' that each piece of fury-footage is repeated five or six times. The programme tries to justify its voyeurism through its 'Anger Expert' talking heads. A disgruntled customer videoed trashing a mobile phone shop is said to be 'taking on the faceless corporation'. Scaled up by several thousand is the wrath directed at another



**Even the kids are angry**

symbol of capitalism, the Tory HQ in Millbank, London. In 2010, protesting students stormed the building, and largely aimed their rage at private property rather than individuals, unlike the riot police. There is also footage of hunt saboteurs in action, with most of the aggression coming from the huntsmen. This shows that political anger has a different target to anger directed at an individual, although the programme tends to conflate the two. All the anger is caused by the system, even when it's not directed back at it. The woman shown chucking her shopping at a man is probably frustrated by being unable to live a fulfilled life, and road rage is surely caused by already stressed-out workers negotiating badly-planned streets. Even the way the scenes are recorded tells us something about how capitalism encourages people to relate to each other. The shopping-thrower is videoed through twitching curtains by an unseen giggler, much like the man in the phone shop is filmed by excited onlookers through a window. Ironically, watching *Angry Britain* is enough to make you fired-up about changing our alienating society.

**Mike Foster**

## From page 5

As if they did not instead adopt it and indeed worsened it; much worse than the colonial leaders: the colonialists had to prove to have some substantial wealth acquired before getting into the legislature; our self-proclaiming 'messiahs' from colonial exploiters are exploiting the followers much worse. They use just political clout/rhetoric (hollow promises) then abuse donor and public funds to enrich only the ruling elite and their relatives, loot and share spoils with even (former) colonial exploiters like the Sam Levis, Bill Irvin, Thomas Meikles, Rautenbachs etc, even allocating them diamond fields, platinum fields, gold fields etc.

The best people such as the Yirira can benefit (if minerals are found around their home) is the 'generosity' of leadership to relocate them, as if the leadership 'moulded' the relocation site. All in all what it now proves is that our leaders were only bitter because the colonialists denied them participating in the splendour (looting from the public and donor coffers, abuse of power) overall, in religion – politics – general system (socio-economic). What has changed is the complexion of leaders, the imperial system is further entrenched in the so-called opposition groups are for the same selfish imperial system socio-economic (just different sides of the same – worthless – Zimbabwe banknotes) vying to abuse the powers that the current are abusing, e.g. did we not have thousands of homeless people in Zim while our president and recent prime minister built/refurbished extra palaces/ castles in Borrowdale, Highlands, Pleasure Mountains (Mount Pleasant)

## Meetings

For full details of all our meetings and events see our [Meetup site](http://www.meetup.com/The-Socialist-Party-of-Great-Britain/):  
<http://www.meetup.com/The-Socialist-Party-of-Great-Britain/>

### London

Tuesday 15 July 8.00pm

North London Branch

'Misogyny and Pornography'

An informal discussion opened and facilitated by guest speaker Gabriella Assirati.

Torriano Meeting House, 99 Torriano Avenue, London NW5 2RX.

### London

Saturday 19 and Sunday 20 July

Party Literature Stall at the Lambeth Country Show, Brockwell Park, London SW2.

apart from already existing plush residencies (private/personal)? And that in 2008 many of us had our funds frozen by RBZ decree, courtesy of Governor Gono, endorsed by central government (during the period of limited withdrawals the elite were allowed to withdraw as much as they wanted), but no redress to the non-elite.

You will find that given the Zim population and the Zim bounty of nature, our poverty is not a result of scarcity of basic necessities. It is the direct result of *downright selfishness*: please note: despite claims by African leaders and claiming to be revolutionaries, they have all been won back by imperialism.

#### GODWIN HATITYE

### SOCIALIST STANDARD INDEX FOR 2013

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### London

Tuesday 15 July 8.00pm

West London Branch

'Models of Revolution'

Speaker: Keith Scholey. Chiswick Town Hall, Heathfield Terrace, London W4 4JN.

### Dorset

Saturday 19 and Sunday 20 July.

South West Regional Branch literature Stall at the Tolpuddle Martyrs Festival, Dorset.

### Doncaster

Saturday 26 July 2.00pm.

Film: *Land and Freedom*

Ukrainian Centre, 48 Beckett Road, Doncaster DN2 4AD.

Leafleting and literature sale in Doncaster Market before meeting by Yorkshire Regional Branch.

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## Declaration of Principles

*This declaration is the basis of our organisation and, because it is also an important historical document dating from the formation of the party in 1904, its original language has been retained.*

### Object

**The establishment of a system of society based upon the common ownership and democratic control of the means and instruments for producing and distributing wealth by and in the interest of the whole community.**

### Declaration of Principles

The Socialist Party of Great Britain holds

1. That society as at present constituted is based upon the ownership of the means of living (i.e. land, factories, railways, etc.) by the capitalist or master class, and the consequent enslavement of the working class, by whose labour alone wealth is produced.

2. That in society, therefore, there is an antagonism of interests, manifesting itself as

a class struggle between those who possess but do not produce and those who produce but do not possess.

3. That this antagonism can be abolished only by the emancipation of the working class from the domination of the master class, by the conversion into the common property of society of the means of production and distribution, and their democratic control by the whole people.

4. That as in the order of social evolution the working class is the last class to achieve its freedom, the emancipation of the working class will involve the emancipation of all mankind, without distinction of race or sex.

5. That this emancipation must be the work of the working class itself.

6. That as the machinery of government, including the armed forces of the nation, exists only to conserve the monopoly by the capitalist class of the wealth taken from the workers, the working class must organize consciously and politically for the conquest of

the powers of government, national and local, in order that this machinery, including these forces, may be converted from an instrument of oppression into the agent of emancipation and the overthrow of privilege, aristocratic and plutocratic.

7. That as all political parties are but the expression of class interests, and as the interest of the working class is diametrically opposed to the interests of all sections of the master class, the party seeking working class emancipation must be hostile to every other party.

8. The Socialist Party of Great Britain, therefore, enters the field of political action determined to wage war against all other political parties, whether alleged labour or avowedly capitalist, and calls upon the members of the working class of this country to muster under its banner to the end that a speedy termination may be wrought to the system which deprives them of the fruits of their labour, and that poverty may give place to comfort, privilege to equality, and slavery to freedom.

# 50 Years Ago

## Faversham

IN ONE by election after another the Labour Party continues to notch up successes.

As each result is declared, both sides set their statisticians to work to show the voting figures in the most favourable light for them.

A Devizes sends the Tories into raptures—the dark night, they croon, is passing and brighter days are ahead. A Faversham puts the Labour Party back onto its hopeful feet, sets its mouth watering again at the prospect of power which, they think, is almost theirs.

A lot of this enthusiasm is inspired by the theory that nothing succeeds like success, that a big vote in one election begets an even bigger one at a later poll. That is why a party only rarely admits to having taken a beating in a fair and square fight. There is always some aspect of the poll which, selected and perhaps exaggerated, can take the edge off a defeat, and they play this up for all they are worth.

At Faversham the Tories showed their disappointment by dropping their beaten candidate, Mrs. Olsen. From the reports which came from the constituency, Mrs. Olsen did not seem to offer a very effective counter to the Labour candidate's earnestly sympathetic appearance, which apparently impressed a lot of voters as sincere.

Mrs. Olsen tried to blow up Nationalisation as an issue, while Labour's Mr. Boston was playing upon the elector's preoccupation with food prices, rates and unemployment. In a constituency where the workless are something of a problem, the Labour line proved the better vote catcher.

(from 'The News in Review', *Socialist Standard*, July 1964)

# ACTION REPLAY

## Play the Game

THE PREMIER League, Formula One and Wimbledon are a tiny tip of a very large iceberg in terms of sporting participation. Most of those who play of an evening or a weekend are amateurs of varying degrees of ability, taking part for fun, for exercise, for bonding with their mates. Many kids play or run or jump or swim, not so that they can win but so they can enjoy themselves, usually as part of a team.

Back in April the MCC and the cricket charity Chance to Shine released the results of a survey they had commissioned, of 8-to-16-year-olds and their parents. The headline finding was that nearly two-thirds of the children said they would not be bothered if the competitive element was removed from school sport. At the same time, almost one parent in four said they would be less interested in their offspring's sporting activity if there was no competition involved.

Wasim Khan, the head of the charity concerned, said, 'It is worrying to see that so many children would be relieved to see com-



petition removed from sport ... We want to teach children the importance of playing sport competitively and fairly, and for them to see the benefits that it can bring to their lives.'

In another comment on these findings, Steve Bull, described as a performance psychologist, argued: 'Competitive sport is a great way of preparing young people for the "real world" in which things will not always go their way. Learning how to deal with adversity, bounce back from disappointment and accept that luck isn't always on your side are important lessons for children to absorb before they step out into the world of work' (*Observer*, 27 April).

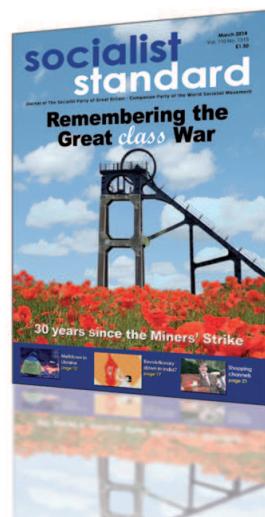
So there you have it: school sport can prepare you for the knocks you are likely to meet later in life, as competitive capitalism throws its worst at you. Don't complain or resist too much, just toughen up and realise that things won't always go your way.

The Duke of Wellington famously said that the Battle of Waterloo was won on the playing fields of Eton, though apparently he was referring to how he learned to survive in fistfights rather than his prowess at cricket. But your school-days don't just fill your heads with religious or patriotic nonsense, they also exploit sport to help you learn how to cope with losing.

PB

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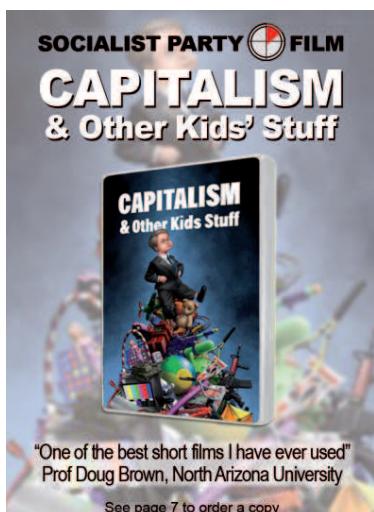
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## National Health Disservice

We have all seen TV hospital dramas where we have applauded the wonderful treatment available to the patients, but this hardly squares up to the reality. For instance, patients who had to spend a night on trolleys at a Glasgow hospital have received letters of apology. 'Several people at the Victoria Infirmary were left on trolleys on Monday night. .... A total of 17 planned operations were cancelled and 50 patients were found care home placements to free up beds. The BBC has been told the Victoria Infirmary even ran out of blankets and pillows, after admissions increased by 24%' (BBC News, 4 June). Of all the shortcomings of capitalism the treatment of sick workers must be one of the worst.

## Morals, Money And Swiss Bank Accounts

One of the appeals to many workers of the Roman Catholic Church is that body's apparent disgust at the financial dishonesty of many aspects of capitalism, but behind this apparent disgust is another story. Pope Francis's battle to clean up the Vatican's scandal-mired bank, the *Institute of Religious Works* (IoR), has entered a new stage, with his removal of the entire board of the Holy City's financial watchdog. 'Among the recent scandals, Monsignor Nunzio Scarano, a former

senior Vatican accountant who had close ties to the IoR, is currently on trial accused of plotting to smuggle millions of dollars into Italy from Switzerland in order to help rich friends lower their tax bills. Investigators believe he used his two IoR accounts as overseas slush funds' (Independent, 5 June).

## FREE LUNCH



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# Voice from the Back

poverty goal was "simply unattainable" and that this was on course to be the first decade since records began in 1961 not to see a fall in absolute child poverty' (Guardian, 9 June). Governments like to portray themselves as masters of capitalism, in fact they are but the so-called organisers of a profit motive system that cannot be organised.

## A Strange Sort Of Recovery

Politicians and the national media proclaim it in banner headlines. Britain is on the road to an economic recovery. The Office for National Statistics said that employment figures had surged by 345,000, the largest quarterly rise since records began in 1971 and drove unemployment down to a five-year low. There is one aspect of this surge in employment figures that politicians are a little less likely to boast about though. 'However, pay fell below inflation. Average annual wage growth dropped to 0.7 per cent in the three months to April, less than half the 1.8 per cent rate at which prices are rising' (Times, 12 June). It is an economic recovery for the owning class. More workers to exploit, less unemployment money to fork out – but for the working class it is a drop in real wages.

## Old Nick In The Middle East

Many theories have been put forward to explain the conflicts that have affected the Middle East but his holiness has come up with a different one. The Pope blamed the Devil for the conflict in the Middle East as he hosted the Israeli and Palestinian presidents for an unprecedented 'prayer for peace' in the Vatican garden. 'In remarks prepared for the ceremony Pope Francis said: "More than once we have been on the verge of peace, but the evil one has succeeded in blocking it. It is my hope that this meeting will mark the beginning of a new journey"' (Times, 9 June). All this time socialists have been blaming capitalism for modern wars while his holiness has come up with a much simpler answer.

## The Decline Of Religion

The fall of religious influence is so great that a grass-roots movement in 2009, the Future for Religious Heritage took shape in 2011 as a network of groups from more than 30 countries, dedicated to finding ways to keep churches, synagogues and other religious buildings open, if not for services, then for other uses. 'Perhaps nowhere is the plight of churches more stark than in the Netherlands, where about 1,000 Catholic churches – about two-thirds of the country – are due to be shut down by 2025, a reorganization forced by a steady drop in attendance, baptisms and weddings. Those were the figures given by Cardinal Willem Eijk, archbishop of Utrecht, in a report delivered to Pope Francis last December' (New York Times, 2 June). Religion has always been a barrier to socialism so no tears here on learning churches are closing.



## Powerless And Pathetic

Fresh evidence that the government will fail to hit its child goals has emerged in a report showing 3.5 million are expected to be in absolute poverty in Britain in 2020 almost five times as many as the target. 'The Social Mobility and Child Poverty Commission said the absolute child